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POPULAR TALES.

THE WAGGONER.

(Concluded.)

To return now to England.—The abduction of Fowler produced a prodigious sensation over the whole country. There was scarcely a house, there were scarce any premises, public or private, but were ransacked for his discovery.—Forster's services were in universal request, to aid in identifying the scenes he had himself described—and he was hurried here, there and every where, for that purpose, but in vain. He could recognise nothing, nor give any clue of information. The affair excited greater alarm than that of Forster; and the whole country round about was rife with dark and dismal speculations concerning the mysterious fate of *THE WAGGONER*. Ballads were made and sung about the streets of Shrewsbury; and at length superstition was roused, who hinted that there were, or might be supernatural agency at work in the business!

Sir William Gwynne was pre-eminent among his fellow magistrates, in exertions to unravel the mysterious transaction; cheerfully devoting day after day to the receiving of depositions, granting of warrants, the examinations of suspected persons; and authorizing the distribution of placards, offering liberal rewards for the discovery of the perpetrators of such an atrocious outrage. He caused the chief of a notorious gang of gipsies, who had been long in ill odour to be arrested, under pretence of a secret information against him. He caused the anonymous letter on which he acted to be made public—and its cunning innuendoes and circumstantiality served to arrest public suspicion, and fix it permanently on the gipsies! All was useless, however. Nothing could be discovered. The devil outwitted all. The veteran gipsy was discharged for want of evidence; the reward-placards gradually disappeared from the walls; new nine-day wonders arose challenging public curiosity in their turn—and all was buried in undiscoverable mystery.

Now, what is the meaning—the reason of all this?—the reader is doubtless exclaiming. He shall shortly be informed.

About two months before the seizure of Richard Forster, Sir William Gwynne, a wealthy and powerful baronet in Shropshire, who had retired to his library after dinner, to write several letters of importance, and was in the act of drawing on his velvet dressing-gown—was informed by his valet

that a gentleman had just arrived at the Hall, who desired to speak to him on urgent business.

'Show him in,' said the baronet, sitting down in his study-chair, which he drew around to the fire. His visitor in a few minutes made his appearance, announcing himself as Mr. Oxleigh—a solicitor, residing at a little distance from Shrewsbury. He was a short, squat, ugly, Jew-featured man, with a muddy-black piercing eye—the beau ideal of a country pettifogger—with 'rogue' written all over his face in characters of impudence. The haughty baronet was sufficiently disgusted with the man at first sight—but much more with his vulgar offensive nonchalance.

'Sir William,' said he, carelessly, approaching a chair, nearly opposite to the frowning baronet—'I'm afraid this is intruding upon you—an inconvenient——'—'Your business, Sir, I pray,' interrupted the baronet, with a stern impatience of tone and manner, that somewhat abashed the attorney; who, instead of sitting down in the chair, as he had intended, stood leaning a moment against the back of it.

'Allow me, Sir William to take a seat,' said he, in a somewhat humbler tone, 'as the business I am come upon may be long and wearisome to both of us.'—'Be seated, Sir—and brief,' replied the baronet, haughtily drawing back his own chair, but with a little surprise in his features.

'I believe, Sir William,' Oxleigh, leisurely taking out one of a packet of papers, tied together with thin red tape, 'that the rental of the Gwynne estates is from £25 to £30,000 per annum?'—'What do you mean, Sir?' slowly inquired the baronet, sitting forward in his chair, and eyeing Oxleigh with unfeigned amazement.

'I believe I am correct, Sir William?' continued the attorney, with a cool composure and impudence that confounded his aristocratical companion.—'Be good enough, Mr.—a—a—whatever your name is—be good enough, Sir, to state your business, and withdraw!' said the baronet in a commanding tone.

'I am afraid, Sir William, that my business will take longer to settle than you seem to imagine,' continued Oxleigh, with immovable assurance. The baronet made an effort to control himself; or, being a powerful man, he might have thrust his presumptuous visitor out of his presence, somewhat unceremoniously.

'I should be sorry, Sir William, either to say or do any thing displeasing or disrespectful—but my duty compels me to say, that in the important

business I am come about I must be allowed my own time, and my own way of going about it. It appears, Sir William—' proceeded the attorney, with-would-be calmness, though his hands trembled visibly, and his voice was thick and hurried.—' My good Sir, your business, whatever it be, had better be transacted with my steward. If you really *have* any business that concerns me, Sir, you clearly do not know how to communicate with *me*. Bundle up your papers, Sir, and retire,' said the baronet, rising to ring his bell.

' Sir William—Sir William!' exclaimed Oxleigh, earnestly, rising from his chair; 'pray—allow me—one—one instant, only. I can say *one word* that will make you, however indisposed, you now are, willing—nay, anxious—to hear me!'—'What *does*—what *can* all this mean, Sir?' inquired the baronet, pausing, with the bell rope still in his hand.

' Only this, Sir William,' said the attorney, putting his packet of papers into his pocket, and buttoning his coat; 'I could have wished to communicate it, in a friendlier manner. You think you have a right to the title of Sir William Gwynne, and these large estates. You have, however, no more right to them than—your obedient humble servant, Job Oxleigh, to command.' The baronet's hand dropped from the bell-rope—the colour left his cheek for a moment, and he stared at the attorney in silence. 'Why, you caitiff!' slowly exclaimed the baronet; and, calmly approaching Mr. Oxleigh, he grasped him with overpowering strength by the collar, holding him for a second or two, and looking in his face as one would into that of a snarling dog, whom one holds by the throat; and then with a violent kick jerked him from him to the further corner of the room, where he lay prostrate on the floor, the blood trickling from his mouth, which had caught the corner of a chair in falling. After continuing there, apparently stunned for a few moments, he rose, and wiping the blood from his lips staggered towards the baronet, who, with his arms folded, was standing before the fire.

' Sir William Gwynne, you have drawn blood from me, you see,' said he, calmly pointing to his spotted handkerchief; 'and in return, be assured I will drain your heart of every drop of blood it contains. I will draw down the law upon you like a millstone, which shall utterly crush you. Great and high man that you are,' he continued in the same calm tone, uninterrupted by him he addressed, 'it is in my power to drag you into the dust—to strip you of all you unjustly possess—to turn you out of this hall a beggar, and expose you to the world as an impostor. Do you hear me, Sir William Gwynne?'—All this was uttered by Oxleigh with the accuracy and impressiveness of a man, who, unwilling to trust to extempore wording in a matter of the last importance, has carefully pondered his language, and even committed *words* to memory. When he had finished speaking, he paused, and watched the baronet, who continued standing motionless and silent before the fireplace as before; but his countenance wore an expression of seriousness, if not agitation, and his eye was settled on that of Oxleigh, as if he would have searched his soul.—' Mr. Oxleigh,' said he, in a lower tone than he had before spoken in—'Whether you have, or have not, ground for what you say, you are a very bold man to hold such language as yours to—Sir William Gwynne! You must know, Sir, that I am a magistrate; and, as you profess to be a lawyer, you must further know I can at once commit you to prison for coming to extort money from me by

threats. That would be a serious charge, Mr. Oxleigh, you know well.'—'Have I mentioned money, Sir William?' inquired Oxleigh calmly. 'But commit me—commit me this moment. You shall the sooner get rid of your title and estate.'

'Why, you impudent man, do you *dare* come here to bandy words and threats with me?'—'Calling names is not talking reason, Sir William; and hard words break no bones,' replied Oxleigh with a bitter smile. 'I call *you* no names, Sir William, and yet I call you by your wrong name; for I shall elsewhere prove you to be *Mister Gwynne*—not *Sir William*! I can afford to be civil, because I have you quite within my grasp as closely as I could wish my deadliest enemy. I am in condition to prove that you are not the rightful heir of this property; that there is some one living who has a *prior right under the entail*.'

'You—swindler!' said Sir William, striding up to him, seizing him a second time by the collar, and shaking him from head to foot.—'Sir William Gwynne—Sir William—you must pay me handsomely for all this—you *must* indeed!' panted Oxleigh, nowise enraged. 'You had better be calm and count the cost! Every kick, thrust, and shake you gave me, is worth its thousands! You are a magistrate, Sir William, you tell me. Have you not committed an assault upon me—a breach of the peace? However, I do not come to quarrel with you, nor am disposed to do so even yet, ill as you have used me; but to tell you that your *all* on earth is at the mercy of him you insult!'

Sir William Gwynne was boiling over with fury; yet he controlled himself sufficiently to say—or rather gasp, 'Well Sir—simply because I cannot think you a madman,—and a madman among the maddest you must be to behave thus without knowing well your ground.'—(Oxleigh smiled contemptuously)—'I am ready to hear what you have to say. Go on, Sir. You may sit down if you choose.' The baronet sat down in his easy-chair, and Oxleigh took a seat opposite to him.

'Not liking to trust my memory in such matters as this, Sir William,' said he leisurely, 'I have committed to paper what I have to say to you, and beg your permission to read it.' The baronet nodded haughtily, and his features wore a very concerned air. Mr. Oxleigh drew out of his hat a sheet of paper, and distinctly read as follows:—'Sir Gwynne Fowler Gwynne died in 1763, bequeathing his estates to his eldest son, Fowler Gwynne Gwynne, and the heirs male of his body; but if his first son died without having been married and leaving male issue, then to his second son, Glendower Fowler Gwynne, and the heirs male of his body; if his second son, however, died unmarried and without leaving male issue, then to the heirs male of Sir Gwynne Fowler Gwynne's niece, Mary Gwynne Evans, on condition that they took the name of 'Gwynne.'

'Sir Fowler Gwynne Gwynne entered, and died at sea, unmarried, in 1683; when his brother, Glendower Fowler Gwynne, entered on the titles and estates—was afterwards married and had two children—'

'Both of whom *died*,' interrupted Sir William eagerly, who had been listening with undisguised and intense anxiety.—'But one of them left *issue*,' continued Oxleigh, calmly.—'and that issue I can produce! Gavin Evans, son of Ellen Evans, (your father, Sir William,) entered in 1740; and had about as much *right* to do so as I.—Do I make myself clear, Sir William?'

'And do you pretend, Mr. Oxleigh,' said the baronet, rather faintly, yet striving to assume a smile of incredulity,—do you *dare* to assert, Mr. Oxleigh, that there is now living lawful issue of Sir Glendower Gwynne?'—'Yes, Sir William, I do—and can prove it. I can reduce your infirm title to the dust with a breath, whenever I please; and thus:—Sir Glendower—as doubtless you know, Sir William—died in 1740, and without male issue, as you imagine, leaving him surviving; but I can show you, that though his daughter Ellen died unmarried, his son, William Fowler Gwynne *was* married in 1733.'

'It is false as hell!—It is false!—It *is* false!' exclaimed the baronet, vehemently—half-choked, yet continuing in his chair, with his eye fixed on Oxleigh.—'Tis too true Sir William—too true for you, I'm afraid!—I say, William Fowler Gwynne was secretly married to Sir Glendower's house-keeper in 1733, and had a son by her in 1733, a few months only before he himself died. I can produce all the necessary registers and certificates, Sir William—I *can*! The marriage was in the proper full name of William Fowler Gwynne; but immediately afterwards his wife dropped the name of Gwynne, and settled in a distant part of Somersetshire, under the name of Fowler; but her son was carefully christened by the name of Gwynne. It is a strong case, Sir William—what we call, in law a *very* strong *prima facie* case,' continued Oxleigh, bitterly. 'I can, at a day's notice, produce that son, who is the proper heir and holder of all you now have—who is now more than of age—'

'Why, sirrah! even on your own showing, I am safe, you—pettifogger, if by right of *possession* only—'—'Pardon me—pardon me, Sir William! There are nine years and a quarter, and more, yet to expire, before that can be the case. I have calculated the time to a minute!—And *now*, Sir William Gwynne, said Oxleigh, with a startling change of tone, 'pay me for the *kick* you gave me!'

The baronet continued silent; though the working of his features showed the prodigious tempest that agitated within.—'Let me be frank, Sir William, I do not presume to *blame* you, for calling yourself a baronet, and enjoying these fine estates; it was done in ignorance;—but, it is hard,—very, *very* hard, to give them up, Sir William!'

'Why, there glares an improbability, if not a falsehood, on the very face of what you say!' said the baronet, in a low tone. 'How could the damned vixen that swindled William Fowler out of his name and land forget to put in claim on behalf of her son till now?'—'You cannot escape me, Sir William! Mrs. Fowler died in childbed, and had changed her residence, by her husband's order, but a week before her confinement. She did not live to explain the nature of her son's right and birth. I, however, know them well, through blessed accident; and have for months ferretted out every fact that can establish the right of that woman's son to titles and estates *you* now hold. There is not however, another person breathing but our two selves, that know of this—indeed there is not, Sir William!'

'Have you here the proofs of all this?' inquired the baronet, wiping the perspiration from his forehead, and looking anxiously at the packet of papers which lay in Oxleigh's hat. Mr. Oxleigh instantly untied them and proffered them to Sir William, who suddenly snatched them up, crushed them together, and with frantic violence of gesture flung them into the blazing fire, where, in an instant, they were

reduced to ashes. Mr. Oxleigh looked on with composure, making not the slightest effort to rescue them. 'Well!—it is but the trouble of another copy from the originals—'—'Copy! *Copy!*' murmured Sir William, aghast, sinking back overwhelmed into his chair.

'Yes!—You have burnt *copies* only, Sir William. And could you really suppose I should bring here the original documents, on purpose for you to destroy them? We lawyers, Sir William, are generally considered a cautious set of men, and do not usually fling ourselves bound hand and foot into the hand of the enemy! And look'ee, Sir William,' continued Oxleigh, fiercely, taking a small pocket-pistol from his bosom, cocking it, and leveling it at the baronet.—'Since I cannot otherwise obtain civility, I shall avenge any future insult you may dare to offer me on the spot. If you menace me never so little,—if you lift but your little finger threateningly towards me by—!—I will shoot you through the heart. I cannot be insulted even by Sir William Gwynne!' said he with a sarcastic emphasis. The baronet looked at him as if he were stupefied with what he had seen and heard.

'Have you any further commands with me in this business, Sir William, or is it *now* your pleasure that I should withdraw?' inquired Oxleigh.—'Yes—withdraw, Sir! Begone!—I will set off to-night for London;—I will lay your atrocious conduct before the Secretary of State—I will seek the advice of eminent counsel—'

'Do not you think, then, Sir William, that *one* depositary of such a secret as this is quite enough? Would you rather prefer being at the mercy of a *dozen* than one?' The baronet heaved a profound sigh, and looked deadly pale.

'Sit down Sir,' said he, in a mournful tone—'pray be seated, Mr. Oxleigh!' Oxleigh bowed, and resumed the chair he had left.

'Put away your pistol, Sir—'—'Excuse me—pardon me Sir William!—Forgive me holding it in my hand, after what was happened between us, as an argument for coolness and consideration, till you and I thoroughly understand one another!' The baronet's lips—rather his whole frame—quivered with insuppressible emotion, and his eyes were suddenly fixed with a kind of anguished stare on those of Mr. Oxleigh. He suddenly hid his face in his hands, pressed his hair back, and muttered—'Surely, surely, this is all dreaming!'

'It is a dreadful business,' exclaimed Oxleigh, 'and I see you feel it to be so. I thought you would.' The baronet spoke not, but seemed absorbed in deep and bitter reflection. 'Sir William,' resumed the attorney, in a low tone, 'is it impossible for us to come to an—amicable adjustment?'

'Great Heaven!' groaned the baronet, rising from his chair, and walking hurriedly to and fro; 'here is absolutely a wretch, in my own house, tempting me to become a villain!—Say, rather a friend, who would persuade you to prefer safety to destruction, Sir William!'

'And pray, what do you mean, Sir, by—an amicable adjustment?' inquired the baronet, sternly,—pausing, and looking full in Oxleigh's face.—'Surely, Sir William it is not very hard to imagine a meaning,' replied Oxleigh, looking unabashed at the baronet with equal keenness and steadfastness. Sir William seemed confused at the easy effrontery of his companion.

'What sirrah, do you mean—that you would wish me to meet the person you have been speaking of, and buy him off heavily?'—'No, no, Sir William;

such a thought never passed through my head. It would be folly personified. There *are* ways of *cutting* the knot: what you name would but tie it faster.

'You would *murder* him then?' said the baronet, in a hollow tone, eyeing Oxleigh with horror. 'Oh no, Sir William; no! There are other ways yet of disposing of him, and firmly securing you. What, for instance, if he were quietly sent out of the country, and kept abroad, without knowing how, why, or by whom? If you can but keep him there for *nine* years, it will be enough; you are safe—his right is barred—he is shut out forever!

'What! why do you pretend to intimate—do you wish me to believe that such conduct could be practised with impunity? That you could by such means cheat him out of his rights, in spite of God and man?'—'I do.' The baronet walked about, frequently stopping, evidently in deep agitating thought; and at length sat down exhaustedly in his chair in silence. He closed his eyes with his hands, and looked that moment as wretched a man as breathed.

'How am I to know, Sir, that you are not, after all, a common swindler—have come here with this trumped-up stuff for the basest purposes?' inquired the baronet, with a scowl of mingled pride and despair. 'By going to the parish church of Grilstone, and for yourself comparing my copies, which I will, *once more*, Sir William,' continued Oxleigh, with stinging emphasis, 'cause to be put into your hands to-morrow, with the original registers and certificates; and if you prove me wrong—that I have deceived you in any thing—in a single title of what I have said—hand me over at once to the pillory, transportation, or death!'

'I *will* Sir!' replied the baronet, with a searching look at Oxleigh; who resumed—'Sir William, I am a lawyer, and a calculating one. I have looked well to the end of what I am doing. Permit me therefore, to say, that my arrangements will not allow of delay. You must choose your alternative—beggary, or baronetcy with £50,000 a year!—And again, Sir William,' continued Oxleigh, drawing out his words slowly, 'there are what we lawyers call *MESNE PROFITS* to be accounted for! What will become of you?' The baronet shuddered. The bare possibility, the distant contingency of such a thing, was frightful. To be not only shorn of his title, income, and standing in society, but have to disgorge two or three hundred thousand pounds to his supplanter! Fearful thoughts and prospects—bloody schemes began to gleam before the disturbed intellects of Sir William Gwynne. What an awful change had a few minutes only wrought in him, his situation, his prospects! Here was a low fellow, a scoundrel, swindling pettifogger, bearding and bullying him in his own house; flashing ruin, disgrace, starvation before his shrinking eyes—coolly goading and edging him on to the perpetration of villany and cruelty, and requiring, doubtless, a participation in the profits! These maddening thoughts kept him long silent.

'Are you, permit me to inquire, thinking of what I have said, Sir William?'—'I am thinking you are too great a villain to live, Sir; and that I had better knock you on the head, and so rid the world of such a ruffian!' replied the baronet, with a desperate air.

'Suppose you *did*, Sir William: a lawyer, like an eel, is hard of dying. I have made such arrangements, as, even were you to succeed in killing me on the spot, here, this night, and which would not,

possibly, be without danger,'—glancing from his pistol to Sir William—'it would do you no good, but rather ruin you at once in every way, with no possibility of escape. I told you I had calculated, Sir William—'

'Oh!—your terms, Sir?' gasped the baronet, interrupting Oxleigh, as though he felt his fate pressing him on.—'Why, I don't know, exactly, whether I could name them at a moment's warning. It is, I presume, superfluous to say, that I must be paid well for any assistance I may render you. Nay, may I not name any terms I choose!—Is it not I who am to dictate?'

'What are your terms, Sir?' repeated the baronet, with an air of consternation at the tone in which Oxleigh spoke: 'whatever they are, name them at once. Don't hesitate, Sir. You know, of course, that you are a scoundrel; but circumstances have made you safe, and protected you from a fury that would have annihilated you,' gasped the baronet, stamping his foot upon the floor. 'Name your terms at once. They *may* be so exorbitant and monstrous, that I may determine, at all risks, to refuse them, and defy you, devil out of hell as you are!'

'Well, Sir William, it is of course for yourself to know your own interests. Let me, however, request you, Sir William, to bear in mind what small courtesy you have this evening deserved at my hands. I would have treated you with the pity due to misfortune!'—'Oh, God! oh, God!—that I must bear all this!' groaned the baronet, compressing his arms with convulsive force upon his breast. Oxleigh smiled.

'I have little further to add to what I have said, Sir William, unless you are disposed to come to terms. It will be a terrible thing for you, if I leave your house to-night without something like a very definite understanding with you. I will be straight forward with you, Sir William, and in a word or two tell you that, to secure my secrecy and co-operation in concealing the fact of this young man's, Fowler's existence,—sending him abroad, and keeping him there,—you must convey to me the fee of a certain estate of yours, in the neighborhood of the house where I live, worth, as I reckon it, £2,000 per annum; and further, must cause it to be believed by the world that I have been a *bona fide* purchaser of it.—The baronet bit his lips, but evinced no symptoms of astonishment or anger. 'Well Sir,' said he, moodily, 'I suppose I must consider your proposal.'

'But allow me, Sir William,—do you consider it *unreasonable*, supposing you to have ascertained the truth of my representations?'—'Why, certainly, Sir, you *might* have been more extravagant,' replied the baronet, gloomily, and with a reluctant air.

'But, further, Sir William, this must be done with no ill grace—no airs of condescension! It must be done as between *gentlemen*!' continued the attorney; 'you and I must hereafter know each other, and associate together as equals—the baronet's blood boiled, and his eye flashed—'we must be intimate, and I shall expect the honor of your good word, and introduction to your friends of the country generally.' While Oxleigh said all this, the tears of agony were several times nearly forcing themselves from Sir William. He rose from his chair, exclaiming in a low tone, 'I—I *cannot* think that all this is real!'

'Will you allow me to remind you that pen, ink and paper are before you, Sir William, and will you

favor me with your written promise to convey to me the property in question?'—'It will be time enough to think of that, Sir, to-morrow, after we shall have inspected the parish register.'

'Excuse me, Sir William, but, with submission, we can do it now, *conditionally*. Nothing like written accuracy on such occasions as these.'—'Well, Sir!' exclaimed the baronet, with a profound sigh: and flinging himself down in his chair, he seized pen and paper, and wrote, pretty nearly to the dictation of the attorney:—Sir William Gwynne, baronet, of Gwynne Hall, Shropshire, engages to convey to Job Oxleigh, Esq. of Oxleigh, in the same county, the fee simple of a certain estate of the said Sir William Gwynne, situate in the same county, and known by the name of 'The Sheaves,' now of a rental of £2,000 per annum, provided the said Job Oxleigh shall prove the truth of his representations, and make good the undertakings specified by him to me, this 15th of October, 1760. And, as the said estate is portion of the estate entailed upon me, I hereby engage to suffer a recovery of the same, in order to cut off the entail, for the purpose of alienating such portion thereof as is above specified. WILLIAM GWYNNE, Gwynne Hall, 15th October, 1760.'

Mr. Oxleigh carefully read this agreement over, folded it up, put it into his pocket-book, and expressed himself satisfied with it. 'Now, Sir William,' said he, in an altered tone, 'we understand one another, and may therefore proceed to business.' 'Mr. Oxleigh—Mr. Oxleigh, not quite so fast, Sir! I have not yet ascertained the truth of your extraordinary representations: till which is done, I will not stir one step in the proceedings. I expect in the course of to-morrow, to be shown the marriage, baptismal, and burial registers, and to be put into possession of the name and residence of the young man we have been speaking of. And you will allow me, Sir, to take this opportunity of telling you two things; that if I should find myself, after all deceived by you, by my God, I will get you hanged; or, if that cannot be done by law, I will shoot you through the head. And I beg, secondly, that you will not talk so much like my equal—in such strain of familiarity with me. Sir, I will not bear such freedom. It chokes me to hear the tone of your speech to me. We shall never be friends so long as you forget that I am a gentleman and a baronet, and *you*—but no matter, Sir, it is against my nature to endure liberties of any kind.' The baronet said all this sternly and bitterly, and drew himself up to his full height as he concluded. The attorney was abashed by the flashing eye and proud bearing of the baronet, and stammered something indistinctly about the respect 'certainly due to misfortune.'

'Sir, your attention a moment,' said the baronet, abruptly, seeing Oxleigh rising as if to go; 'tell me what is to be done in this matter, supposing all to prove true that you have said. How is this young man to be found? how is he to be got securely rid of?' inquired the baronet, anxiously. 'Why, Sir William, I see no other safe and sure way than—kidnapping him in the night—blindfolded—his arms bound—and in that fashion conveyed abroad. We could soon get him to the Channel.'

'And who is to do all this? Must we have *more* depositaries of our secret?' inquired the baronet, with a bitter smile, echoing the expression a short time before used by Oxleigh: 'Do you pretend to say that your own hands are sufficient for this cruel—this horrid work?' 'No, Sir William; nor yet are yours sufficient, even with mine: but we

must neither of us, therefore, be idle. We must hire at least two desperate fellows, and pay them well—stop up their mouths with bank notes; and, besides, there is no need for them to be entrusted with the *reason* of what they are doing; we can easily give *them* any story we like.'

'It is a frightful business! Here, the devil, has taught you how to make a villain in a moment out of a man who, but an hour ago, might have believed his soul to be full of honor and nobility! I am undone! I am fit for hell, for even listening to you!' 'Well, it is easily remedied; I can tell you a way of preserving spotless honor—'

'What do you mean, Sir?' inquired the baronet, abruptly. 'By simply giving up your *all*,—surrendering your title and estates to a—waggoner—a common waggoner,—making up to him two or three hundred thousand pounds—and earning your own bread for the rest of your life. *That*, now, Sir William, would certainly be noble!' The baronet groaned. 'We are all the creatures of circumstances, Sir William; we must all yield to fate!' 'Patter your nonsense elsewhere, Sir!' replied the baronet angrily; 'I want no devil's preaching *here*!'

'I wonder, Sir William,' retorted Oxleigh, thoroughly nettled by the lofty bearing of the baronet, and the contemptuous tone in which he addressed him, 'you can so easily forget that I, who am really and in fact *your master* yet consent to become your friend—your adviser! Have I not been moderate in my demands? What if I had demanded half your fortune?' 'And how do I know but you will hereafter? Let me advise you, Mr. Oxleigh, not to irritate a desperate man; for I now tell you, that if you *were* to increase your demands on me above what is already, perhaps, too easily conceded, I would certainly take your life!'

'Sir William—I had better be frank with you, as I said before—I never thought I should be free from danger—though 'nothing venture, nothing have,'—that my life would be otherwise than in perpetual jeopardy—and so I will tell you at once what arrangements I have made to provide for my own security. I have drawn up a full statement of the matters which I have mentioned to you this evening, sealed it up and placed it in the hands of my London agent, with explicit directions for him to open it, directly on hearing of my death, either naturally or violently, for at least nine years to come; so that not only would it do you no good to take away my life, Sir William, but it would immediately ruin you.' 'Ah!—Well, here, then, is an end of our bargain. Give me up the paper I have put into your hands! I will not treat with you on such terms!'—said the baronet, his face blanched a whiter hue than before.

'You cannot help yourself, Sir William!' replied the attorney, calmly. 'Only be pleased to reflect—and you will yourself see that you cannot.'

'Mr. Oxleigh,' said the baronet, suddenly, 'I have been thinking of this matter. Supposing all to be as you say, and it should prove necessary to send this man out of the country, there is surely, there can certainly be, no need for *my* appearance or meddling in the business?—I need not personally have a hand in it!—Cannot I leave it all to *you*, Mr. Oxleigh, and your assistants?'

'Then, Sir William, what security would you have? How would you know that I had really performed my promise to you? That I had not played you false? Besides, Sir William, this is a dangerous, a very black business—a perilous, a deadly job; and I cannot consent to bear it upon

my own shoulders—to stand alone in it. You must help me, Sir William—must work as hard and risk as much as I. Our hands must both assist in removing this obnoxious person!—I am a man of my word, Sir William!—I cannot forego this!—To be equally safe, we must be equally guilty, Sir William! equally committed to each other!”

“Pray, Sir, what did you say was this young man’s name?” “William Fowler Gwynne—but he goes by the name of William Fowler only.”

“Does he know that he bears the name of Gwynne, Sir? Has he any inkling of what you have now been telling me?” “No more than the dead!”

“What is he now?” “I am not quite sure, Sir William. He is poor and ignorant—a carter, I believe, or waggoner; but I shall know more by to-morrow.”

“Till to-morrow, then, Sir, we must part,” said the baronet. “Be here to-morrow at nine, and we will say more on the subject. Good evening, Sir.” “Good evening, Sir William; good evening. I shall be with you at nine to-morrow; and hope we shall then be better friends. Good evening, Sir William!”—and Oxleigh presumptuously tendered his hand to the baronet, who reluctantly laid his cold fingers—the flesh creeping the while with disgust—in those of Oxleigh; and in a moment or two he was left alone. He sat back in his ample arm-chair, for nearly two hours, in stupified silence. He was to have written three or four important election letters, and one to his intended wife that evening; but being now unequal to the task, he thrust his table from him, rung for candles, and went to bed, saying to his valet that he was ill. It need hardly be said that he passed a fearful night; several times being on the point of leaping out of bed, and committing suicide. True to his time, the villain Oxleigh made his appearance at the Hall as the clock was striking nine. Sir William met him with a fevered brow and bloodshot eyes; and in half an hour’s time both of them stepped into the carriage, which Sir William had ordered to be in readiness. They drove rapidly into Somersetshire; and Sir William returned thunderstruck with what he had seen—ample and indubitable corroboration of all Oxleigh had told him over night—a ruined, a blighted man. It was long before he recovered the stunning effects of the disclosure. He gradually became passive in the hands of Oxleigh. The servants at the Hall, and Sir William’s friends, equally wondered what could be the reason of Oxleigh’s perpetual presence at the Hall.

In three weeks’ time, it was a matter of notoriety over the country, that Job Oxleigh, Esq. of Oxleigh, had purchased ‘The Sheaves’ estate, from Sir William Gwynne; and shortly after the seizure with which this narrative commences. Sir William and Oxleigh with two desperate fellows hired by Oxleigh, were the four that set upon Forster, and, subsequently, William Fowler. Sir William became one of the most miserable of men. His altered demeanor and habits became matter of public observation. He contrived to have it given out that he had become addicted to the gambling-table; and the subtle Oxleigh encouraged the rumor—even allowing himself to be thought one of Sir William’s winners! That consummate scoundrel contrived to write himself, in two or three years’ time, Job Oxleigh, Esq. M. P.; and was on terms of intimate acquaintance with most of the leading men in the country. He easily made his presence, in a manner, necessary to the wretched baronet, whose nobler soul drooped daily under the pressure

of guilt contracted in a weak and evil hour; and so wormed himself into his confidence, that, what with wheedling and menace, he obtained an introduction to a female relative of the baronet’s and married her.

(Concluded in our next.)

MISCELLANEOUS.

For the Rural Repository.

NATURE.

It would be impossible to follow all the imagination, or to dwell on all the beauty which has been thrown over the different objects of nature. Nature speaks a thousand languages;—and her voice is clothed with such a power, that it operates with almost magical effect upon her contemplators.

I have seen the silver bosom of a noble stream stretched calmly and severely amid the deep solitude of an unbounded forest. It was pure and unruffled—soft and clear as if the robe of azure on high had been torn asunder and a fragment fallen to the earth. I see the impression of the tall, proud, wide-armed trees, which throw themselves up to the heavens by its banks, full and fair upon its surface. I see the faint, sombre shade, that is cast from its low banks, lying softly and lightly along the shore; and every slender bush, every running vine, every wild water flower that swims on its fair brow, possessing power sufficient to raise a ripple there. How fair—how noble and enchanting—this is nature—original, unadulterated nature! The axe has not rang in the wilderness in whose bosom it lies, nor has the march of improvement eradicated the wild natural beauty of the stream. It seemed to me that, as I gazed upon this scene, I could feel each tumultuous passion, which wave-like rocked in my breast, one by one die away, until my whole being harmonized with the scene.

The scene changes. I stand a few miles farther down this river. The waters, which slept so transparently, begin to tremble and rock lightly at first, becoming more and more agitated as it descends. I look away over the face of it, and behold clusters of rocks, where they throw their flinty, uncouth forms above the wild waves. The stream drives madly on like a whirlwind past them. It bubbles and foams as it dashes to and fro, throwing its spray high into the air; then, as it rushes over some uneven bottom, it plunges down and mounts up—down and up—down and up, carrying on its way the small fragments of the wilderness which it has washed from its own shores; then assuming another shape, it whirls round and round with lightning-like velocity; then, pushing downward, it quirls itself gracefully over into a wave whose edge is all of a lively and boiling foam; then shooting obliquely across, starting backward, driving to and fro, rushing all ways, and still moving its whole body steadily onward to its final place of destination.

Oh! there is something lovely in nature. It melts away the rolling passions of man and moulds him to her own liking. Look away to the west, and see the king of day go blazing down beneath the green pine tops which skirt the horizon. I see half his fiery form, yet visible, throwing, aslant the mount, his shower of gold over the fresh hill tops in brighter and then more dusky colors. Away up, swimming in the blue ocean, sails a few soft, fleecy and ragged clouds, tinged with the strong, yet bland touch of nature’s pencil. How sweet the look—like a crimson sail lagging in a calm upon the mighty deep—like a sweet spirit which has shot from its worldly sphere—like a banner hoisted out from the invisible

world, or like a world of perfection itself, where all is contentment and bliss, it rests purely there, sublimely beautiful. But, it melts—it dissolves in the azure which surrounds it, and like the brilliant hopes of man, evaporates, and all is blank where it once slept. The last shade of the sun now gilds the eastern mountain. The vale is dimly overshadowed with a dusky cast, between twilight and day. The stream, as it rushes down over its rocky bed, reverberates with a deeper roar at this romantic moment. The tall, shady trees wear a sober aspect. The forest at a distance, assumes various colors in the uncertain light;—and, in fine, a peculiar spell, a sort of enchantment appears to be thrown round the objects of nature; when gathering on, shade by shade, full darkness at last flings her sable cloak upon all sublunary things.

To conclude, if there is a noble feeling springing within the breast of man—if the tide of thought rises in his head—if one single glow of imagination ever shot forth from him, or the swell of nature moved his being, he cannot be insensible to nature's multifarious monuments, or quell the thrill of ecstacy which trembles over him as he beholds her works. R.

Pulpit Interruption.—An amusing instance of indecorum which occurred at Biggar. It must be well known that the more ignorant and zealous congregations of the Scottish church, in common with those belonging to what is called the *Secession*, entertain a very strong prejudice against the use of written notes in the pulpit. The contempt with which clergymen are sometimes treated on this account would astonish those of more liberal minds. In one case, which has come within our knowledge, this contempt proceeded so far as to occasion a *speaking out*. The minister of Biggar, in Lanarkshire, whose abilities, whatever they might be, were held in the utmost scorn on account of his *reading*, was one day concluding his discourse, as an old woman of the true old leaven was leaving the church. He closed the leaves of his sermon and those of the bible at the same time, saying, with emphasis, intended as a sort of clench to his argument, 'I add no more.'—'Because ye canna!' cried the old woman.

A Terrible Disease.—'How do you do Jack? What ails you man?' inquired a friend to another. 'Oh! my dear fellow' replied he, 'I have got a terrible bilious disorder.' 'Indeed!' said the first, 'I did not know before that you were subject to bile!' 'Bile!' said he, 'oh no, but I am so, to a heap of *bills* which I can't pay, and if this be not a *bill-ious* disorder, pray what is it?'—

Zeuxis entered into a contest of art with Parrhasius. The former painted grapes so truly, that birds came and pecked at them. The latter delineated a cloth so exactly, that Zeuxis, coming in, said, 'Take away the cloth, that we may see this piece;' and, finding his error, said, 'Parrhasius, thou hast conquered. I deceived but birds; thou an artist.'

An impudent fellow quizzing a gunsmith on the Strand, asked him whether a curious pistol, which he saw in the window, would go off. To which the gunsmith replied, 'To a certainty, if it were within your reach!'

At a recent parliamentary dinner, Mr. Plunkett was asked if Mr. Hume did not annoy him by his

broad speeches. 'No,' replied he, 'it is the *length* of the speeches, not their *breadth*, that we complain of in the House.'

A Quaker gentleman, covered with his beaver, was once in company with a lady rather too much uncovered, who drank a toast to his 'broad bottomed beaver.' The quaker having thanked her for the honor she did him, observed filling up a bumper, 'in return for thy civility Maria, I drink to thy absent handkerchief.'

Cheap Curses.—The Puritans were more severe in the punishment of swearing than cursing, for when an Irishman was fined a shilling for an oath, he asked what he should pay for a curse?—They said sixpence. He threw down sixpence and cursed the whole committee.

A certain lodging house was very much infested by vermin. A gentleman who slept there one night told the landlady so in the morning, when she said, 'La, sir, we hav'ent a single bug in the house,' 'No ma'am,' said he, 'they are all *married*, and have *large families* too.'

RURAL REPOSITORY.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 20, 1832.

The Cincinnati Mirror.—The publishers of this interesting periodical have issued the first number of the second volume, in which they offer *Fifty Dollars*, for the best Original Tale, suitable for publication in its columns.—Articles intended to compete for the Premium must be forwarded by the first of February next, addressed to Wood and Stratton, Publishers of the Mirror, Cincinnati, Ohio.

The Garland.—A new semi-monthly journal bearing this title has just been commenced by Willys Smith, at Hamilton, U. C. The number before us is in the octavo form, neat in its appearance and made up of a pleasing variety of well chosen articles.—We wish it success.

LETTERS CONTAINING REMITTANCES.

Received at this office, from Agents and others, ending Oct. 15th.

J. S. Owen, Sheffield, Ms. \$1; J. Sears, Jun. Bristol Centre, N. Y. \$2; E. C. Baker, Lyme, N. H. \$1; S. Beckley, Jun. Canaan, Ct. \$1; J. P. Ellis, Marlus, N. Y. \$2; J. Remington, N. Greenwich, N. Y. \$1; J. Hoffman, Claverack, N. Y. \$1; L. Wells, Princetown, N. J. \$1; J. Whabeck, Claverack, N. Y. \$1; E. S. Woodford, Wachuset, Ct. \$1; L. M. Nye, Union Society, N. Y. \$1; W. Luce, Phelps, N. Y. \$3; C. Marsh, Dalton, Ms. \$1; W. A. Shumway, Wallham, Ms. \$1.

SUMMARY.

The New Orleans papers, of the 15th ult. say:—On Thursday evening, a large seizure was made on board of a brig, just arrived from Havana, by the Revenue officers, consisting of 60,000 Segars and a large quantity of Rum.

Messrs. Childs and Inman have just published a beautiful lithographic print of Miss Kemble, taken from a portrait of Sir Thomas Lawrence. It does great credit to the lithographic establishment, of which the operations are advancing in excellence, variety and usefulness.

The quantity of gold and silver money circulating in the commercial world is estimated by Mr. M'ulloch at something less than three hundred millions sterling.

The Wheeling Bank Robbery.—A letter from Wheeling mentions that the doors of the Bank were opened by means of false keys; the iron chest, containing the paper money taken was forced open with the help of an iron bar, and that the robbers left in the chest four or five thousand dollars in gold, and from ten to twelve thousand in paper of other banks. Besides these such large bundles of the Wheeling Bank Paper, in sheets, were left un molested.

DIED.

At Livingston, on the 5th inst. William, only child of Henry A. and Eveline Dubois, aged 13 months.

At Claverack, on the 12th inst. Anthony Ten Broeck, in the 76th year of his age.

In this city on Wednesday the 10th inst. John Waterman, son of Elijah Waterman, aged 24 years.

POETRY.

For the Rural Repository.

A SKETCH.

There was beauty above them—the deep azure sky,
With stars thickly blazoned, was glowing on high,
And the moon, as she moved in her pathway of light
Across the broad heavens, was so fair and so bright,
That she seemed like a spirit, to man, who declared.
How small were his works when with nature's compared.

There was beauty around them—the sweet, pensive
night

Had gemmed every leaf with her dew drops, so bright—
There was beauty beneath them—gay June's brightest
flowers

Enameled the mountains, the vallies, and bowers,
And the streams as they silently flowed through the glade,
A surface of silver by moon-light displayed.—

All, all was then beautiful, fair, and serene,
And O, could there *then* evil thoughts intervene?
Could Passion's deep stream then burst forth from its
source,

And Reason destroy in her o'erwhelming course?
Oh yes; for though nature was tranquil and still,
Man's heart, yet unchanged, was the empire of ill,
And a dark, dreary contrast their hearts now presented,
To those placid scenes, which calm nature had painted.

And the warm flush of passion has ting'd that fair
cheek—

And passion now dictates the vows which they speak,
And the soft hand is pressed, and the warm kiss is given,
But bright, calm, and cold, seem the earth and the
heaven;

And they vowed by each star that was twinkling on high,
They vowed by the moon as she shone in the sky,
They vowed by each stream, and each mountain, and
vale,

That all these should change, ere their constancy fail.

And were those vows remembered? No—quickly they
seemed

To the memory of each, like a tale they had dreamed,
And as on life's current they rapidly passed,
Even that trace so slight, was from memory cast.

And thus it is ever in life's changing scenes,
The past is forgot, in what next intervenes;
And yet vows of constancy ever are given,
Which scarcely outlast the cold dew drop of even,
And as thousands, and thousands, of years roll away,
And their deep waters lose in oblivion's dark bay,
The like scenes are acted, the same reign,
As first found their home in the bosom;
And yet that bright moon looks as coldly on earth,
And on life's madd'ning scenes, both of sorrow and mirth,
As when, at the word of her Maker, supreme,
First glanced through the heavens her silvery beam,
And her unvarying course still she keeps through the
skies,

Unmoved by the tempests, and clouds, that arise,
And a fit emblem seems, of the sleep of the tomb,
Where passions disturb not and tempests ne'er come.

From the New Monthly Magazine.

THE LAST TREE IN THE FOREST.

BY FELICIA HEMANS.

Whisper thou Tree, thou lonely Tree,
One where a thousand stood!
Well might proud tales be told of thee,
Last of the solemn wood!

Dwells there no voice amidst thy boughs,
With leaves yet darkly green?
Stillness is round and noontide glows—
Tell us what thou hast seen.

'I have seen the forest shadows lie,
Where now men reap the corn;
I have seen the kingly chase rush by,
Through the deep glades at morn.

'With the glance of many a gallant spear,
And the wave of many a plume,
And the bounding of a hundred deer,
It hath lit the woodland's gloom.

'I have seen the knight and his train ride past,
With his banner borne on high,
O'er all my leaves there was brightness cast,
From his gleamy panoply.

'The pilgrim at my feet hath laid
His palm branch 'midst the flowers,
And told his beads and meekly pray'd
Kneeling at vesper hours.

'And the merry men of the wild and glen,
In the green array they wore,
Have feasted here with the red wine's cheer,
And the hunter's sons of yore.

'And the minstrel resting in my shade,
Hath made the forest ring
With the loudly tales of the high Crusade,
Once loved by chief and king.

'But now the noble forms are gone,
That walked the earth of old;
The soft wind hath a mournful tone,
The sunny light locks cold.

'There is no glory left us now,
Like the glory of the dead:—
I would that where they slumber now,
My latest leaves were shed!

Oh! thou dark Tree, thou lonely Tree,
That mournest for the past!

A peasant's home in thy shade I see,
Embowered in every blast.

A lovely and a mirthful sound
Of laughter meets mine ear;
For the poor man's children sport around
On the turf with nought to fear.

And roses lend that cabin's wall
A happy Summer glow;
And the open door stands free to all,
For it recks not of a foe.

And the village bells are on the breeze
That stir thy leaf, dark Tree!—
How can I mourn, amidst things like these,
For the stormy Past, with thee?

ENIGMAS.

Answers to the PUZZLES in our last.

PUZZLE I.—Because it's a notion—an ocean.

PUZZLE II.—The word *News*.

NEW PUZZLES.

I.

Twenty pronouns, nineteen troop of horse, seven of
light infantry, what the ladies like because the gentlemen
hate it, a tabby cat, a disappointed lobster, a willow
bonnet, an oyster in love, Randolph's nose, a child one
year old, the third curl of a gentleman's wig, may all be
expressed by a liquid in common use.

II.

Why is a morose old Bachelor as much out of place
at a wedding as the epithalamium?

Lithographic Prints,

Just received and for sale at A. Stoddard's Bookstore, a great
variety of choice Lithographic Prints, among the rest a striking
likeness of Miss Fanny Kemble.

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